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SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING.—MONDAY, JULY 6, 1863.

The VERY REV. CHARLES GRAVES, D. D., President, in the Chair.

READ the following extracts from the "Report upon the Royal Dublin Society, the Museum of Irish Industry, and the System of Scientific Instruction in Ireland" (pp. 33, 34), which apply to the Royal Irish Academy:—

“OTHER GRANTS IN AID OF SCIENCE AND ART IN DUBLIN.

“The other Institutions at Dublin which receive grants in aid of Science and Art, are—

“The Royal Irish Academy, which combines the objects of the London Royal and Antiquarian Societies, and has acquired a high reputation for the learning and activity of its researches. The last annual vote was £500.

“The Royal Hibernian Academy, which was formed on the model of the Royal Academy of London, and receives an annual grant of £300. It was inquired into by Mr. Macleod, in 1858, on behalf of the Department of Science and Art, and the annual grant was then appropriated entirely to the educational purposes of the institution.

“The National Gallery for Paintings and Sculpture. This has been recently erected under the authority of two Acts of Parliament, passed in the years 1854 and 1855, and the arrangements for completing its fitments and acquiring its contents are in active progress. An elaborate constitution, partly official and partly popular, has been given to it by the same Acts of Parliament.

“The Zoological Society, which receives an annual grant of £500, and raises a larger sum from private subscriptions, and from the receipts at the door. This well-managed Society contributes in a high degree to the instruction and amusement of the public.

“The annual grant to the Zoological Society is voted in the estimate of the Royal Dublin Society; but, besides acting as the channel for its payment, that Society does not exercise any interference with respect to it. Some advantage would be gained if all the Parliamentary grants in aid of Science and Art at Dublin were, in like manner, included in the estimate of the Royal Dublin Society, and were paid through its medium, inasmuch as they would then be annually brought under consideration in one point of view, and the Council of the Royal Dublin Society would have an opportunity of making any representation which the circumstances of the time might render proper in reference to them.

“Beyond this, we cannot advise that the Royal Dublin Society should be vested with any control over the proceedings of the other Societies. Freedom of action is indispensable for the success of institutions which depend upon voluntary unpaid agency; and, even when

there is some general connexion between the objects of such institutions, greater aggregate results, and even a greater disposition to co-operate, may be expected from a suitable division of labour and responsibility than from any consolidation that could be effected.

“The long established and comprehensive character of the Royal Dublin Society has already made it, to some extent, a point of union for the other local institutions for the cultivation of science and art; and when its constitution shall have been strengthened, and its means of instruction enlarged in the manner we have recommended, this tendency to approximate is likely to be increased. Real public benefit would ensue from voluntary affiliation of this kind, even if it did not go beyond a general recognition of the precedence due to the Royal Dublin Society, and an occasional comparison of what is in progress in each institution, in order to secure harmonious action, and as much reciprocal aid as the nature of the case admits.”

The following Resolutions were unanimously adopted :—

I. That the Royal Irish Academy regards with surprise and alarm the suggestion contained in the Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry respecting Scientific Instruction in Ireland, that the Academy should be placed under the superintendence, and to some extent under the control, of the Council of the Royal Dublin Society.

II. That the Commissioners appointed by the Treasury to inquire into a number of Scientific Institutions, including this Academy, have made the above recommendation without examining any of its Officers, or even notifying their intention of taking evidence affecting its interests.

III. That such an arrangement would be incompatible with the dignity of an Academy incorporated as this is by Royal Charter, and would tend to lower it in the estimation of the public ;—would be destructive of the independence and freedom of action of the gentlemen by whose unpaid agency the work of the Academy is, in a great measure, performed ;—and would inevitably lead to misunderstanding and collision between bodies which have always occupied, and ought still to occupy, distinct, though equally important, spheres of action. In fact, the objections to such an arrangement felt by the Members of the Royal Irish Academy are such as would be felt by the Members of the Royal Society of London to a proposal to submit them, in any degree, to the control of the Society of Arts.

IV. That the Academy entirely dissents from the opinion expressed in the Report of the Commissioners, to the effect that real public benefit would ensue from affiliation of this Academy to any other Society.

V. That the only other reason assigned by the Commissioners for an innovation which would thus compromise the honour and interests of an important National Institution is an alleged official convenience of the most inconsiderable kind.

VI. That the Academy, for the foregoing reasons, protests against the proposed change.

VII. That copies of the foregoing Resolutions be forwarded to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant; to the Lords of the Treasury; to the Committee of Council for Education; to the Secretary of the Department of Science and Art; and to all the Irish Members of both Houses of Parliament.

IT WAS ALSO RESOLVED,—That full authority be delegated to the Council to take such steps as they may consider expedient to protect the interests and independence of the Academy.

The Academy then adjourned.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1863.

The VERY REV. CHARLES GRAVES, D. D., President, in the Chair.

THE President handed in the following letters, and explained,—that on the very same day on which the Academy met, and passed the resolutions just read by the Secretary (see “Proceedings,” p. 396), the letter addressed to him from the Chief Secretary’s office was forwarded to him; but he did not receive it until he went home after the meeting. In it was enclosed the letter from the Lords of the Treasury, explaining that the idea of affiliating the Academy to the Royal Dublin Society had been given up. Having received that assurance, the President at once suspended all further proceedings. “It was,” he said, “a result extremely gratifying to the Academy, as we all felt that without the independence which we asked in the resolutions, it would be impossible for us to maintain that dignity which we have always maintained in the face of the country and of the scientific world” :—

“*Dublin Castle, 6th July, 1863.*”

“SIR,—Referring to your letter of the 27th ultimo, relative to the proposed amalgamation of the Royal Irish Academy with the Royal Dublin Society, I am directed by the Lord Lieutenant to state, that it affords His Excellency much pleasure to transmit to you, for the information of the Members of the Academy, a copy of a letter received from the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, from which it will be seen that it is not now intended to carry into effect that portion of the Report of the Commissioners which adverts to the connexion of the Royal Irish Academy with the Royal Dublin Society.

“I am sir, your obedient servant,

“THOMAS LARCOM.

“*To the President of the Royal Irish Academy.*”